AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A fluid transfer device, comprising:

a lid portion;

an edge portion connected to the lid portion, the edge portion and lid portion forming a receiving cap, the receiving cap defining a space configured to receive a bead of a container closed by an elastic stopper, the edge portion being configured to center the bead within the space when the bead is substantially disposed in the space; and

a piercing mandrel connected to the lid portion and projecting into the space,

wherein the piercing mandrel includes a piercing portion configured to pierce the elastic stopper [[when]] while the bead is being substantially disposed in the space;

wherein the piercing mandrel includes a sealing portion having a diameter greater than a diameter of the piercing portion, the sealing portion being configured to contact the elastic stopper when the bead is substantially disposed in the space;

wherein the piercing mandrel includes a flow channel therethrough, the flow channel being configured to convey fluid away from the container.

13. (Previously Presented) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the receiving cap includes a central longitudinal axis,

wherein the receiving cap is substantially symmetrical about the central longitudinal axis.

14. (Previously Presented) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the diameter of the piercing mandrel as it transitions from the front piercing portion to the sealing portion is stepped.

15. (Currently Amended) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the sealing portion of the piercing mandrel includes an end face,

wherein the end face is configured such that when the bead is substantially disposed in the space, the interface between the end face and the elastic stopper has a<u>n</u> ~~substantially~~ annular shape.

16. (Previously Presented) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the sealing portion of the piercing mandrel is configured to penetrate the elastic stopper when the bead is substantially disposed in the space.

17. (Previously Presented) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the edge portion includes an inward projection configured to engage a behind portion of the bead when the bead is substantially disposed in the space.

18. (Previously Presented) The fluid transfer device of claim 17, wherein a first axial distance between the inward projection and the sealing portion is less than a

second axial distance between the inward projection and a surface of the elastic stopper facing the lid portion when the bead is substantially in the space.

19. (Previously Presented) The fluid transfer device of claim 15, wherein the end face includes an integrated sealing element.

20. (Previously Presented) The fluid transfer device of claim 19, wherein the sealing element is an O-ring.

21. (Previously Presented) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the piercing portion of the piercing mandrel is substantially conically shaped and widens toward the sealing portion.

22. (Currently Amended) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the sealing portion of the piercing mandrel is [[a]] substantially conically shaped and adjoins the piercing portion of the piercing mandrel.

23. (Previously Presented) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein a transition between the sealing portion of the piercing mandrel and the piercing portion of the piercing mandrel is substantially stepless.

24. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the piercing mandrel is embedded in the lid portion.

25. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the piercing mandrel is stationary relative to the lid portion when the piercing portion pierces the elastic stopper.

26. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 17, wherein the inward projection is disposed radially around the piercing mandrel even before the piercing portion pierces the elastic stopper.

27. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 17, wherein the piercing portion is disposed further away from the lid portion than the inward projection.

28. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 12, wherein the sealing portion of the piercing mandrel is configured to penetrate the elastic stopper while the bead is being substantially disposed in the space.

29. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 17, wherein the sealing portion is configured to contact the elastic stopper substantially at the same time as when the inward projection engages with the behind portion of the bead.

30. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 17, wherein a portion of the edge portion extends away from both the lid portion and the inward projection.

31. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 17, wherein the edge portion includes a free edge extending away from the inward projection.

32. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 31, wherein the free edge has an outer diameter larger than an outer diameter of both the inward projection and a portion of the edge portion between the inward projection and the lid portion.

33. (New) The fluid transfer device of claim 31, wherein the free edge has an inner diameter larger than an outer diameter of both the inward projection and a portion of the edge portion between the inward projection and the lid portion.